1: Honigmann, E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

TECHNICAL CULTURE

128 LIKE all societies, the Kaska Indians are faced with the problem of surviving in a physical environment. In this division we will discuss Kaska culture as it is directed toward maintaining adaptation to the climate, weather, and natural resources of a specific geographical area, while at the same time it strives to preserve life and comfort by satisfying the physical needs of the human organism.

ANNUAL CYCLE

● 221 The economic life of the Kaska tribes is closely bound up with the exploitation of their forest surroundings. During the summer months, the people live leisurely around the trading post, relying upon the traders' stocks for almost all of their requirements. The means to buy these goods, however, is the money received for fur that was trapped during the previous winter and spring.

A good time to begin studying the annual cycle is in August or September, when the people, by quitting Lower Post, put an end to their relatively idle summer. Returning home to the winter settlements and trap lines is always undertaken with great eagerness since, among other rewards, it means relief from the oppressive diet of canned meat and other staples and promises a welcome supply of fresh meat and fish. The months until early November are occupied with hunting, drying meat, working hide, building or repairing cabins, and manufacturing equipment like toboggans, sleighs, and snowshoes, which will be necessary for winter trapping. With the first heavy snowfall, hunting becomes of secondary importance and trapping begins for fine fur. This activity is often interrupted around Christmas for a visit to the trading post by men and boys. Here skins are sold and additional food purchased for transportation home. Two or three such trips may be made in the course of a winter. With the arrival of March, beaver and muskrat trapping starts and when this period ends in spring, the people are ready to undertake their summer visit to Lower Post, where they arrive in late May or June.

CAPITAL

477 Against this bird's eye view of the round of Kaska life, we now take up in detail the
526 economically productive routines of the people. All of the exploitative and technological processes to be described depend on a remarkably small accumulation of capital or producer goods, much of which is of negligible intrinsic value.

471 A large portion of the capital goods used by the Kaska is not manufactured by the
[491] society but is purchased from traders. Such goods include guns, traps, fish nets, sewing machines, snare wire, knives, meat tools and implements, matches, vessels, and utensils. Pack dogs are domesticated locally although small hunt dogs are purchased from Tahltan Indians. Other products, equally important in carrying out adaptive routines, are manufactured by the society. Included here are ladders, windlasses, packsacks, dogcribs, lines, wedges, and skin stretchers. The construction of most native manufactures, however, de-

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

hide which is to be cleaned. Another pole is placed across the lower portion of the horizontally leaning poles and lashed in position. The skin is then perforated and fastened to the frame. When hides are to be softened, they are fixed on a smaller frame, consisting of four poles, to which the side poles are anchored in the ground perpendicularly (Pl. 8, a).

Construction of most apparatus and all tool making is done by men. Young girls sometimes make stretchers for squirrel skin and women commonly erect the poles for stretching and softening moosehide.

Machines employed by the Kaska have either been purchased from traders or adopted from white sources. Among the machines in the former category are sewing machines, owned by women but purchased by men, and outboard motors, the property of men. A pulley is a common possession and in the fall is used in conjunction with an improvised winch to pull boats out of the water. The winch is made by driving two poles about four inches in diameter and five feet long into the ground about six feet apart. Each pole is grooved on the side which is away from the water and about six inches from the top. A smooth green pole, about four inches in diameter, is fitted into these grooves to serve as a winch. The pull of the boat is sufficient to keep the winch from slipping out of the grooves. A handle is made by lashing a green spruce pole, about two feet long and two inches in diameter, at right angles to the winch.

Every household uses such cooking utensils as frying pans, straight kettles varying in size from one to five quarts, coffee pots, bowls, plates, cups, silver plated spoons and forks, wash basins, and washtubs. A few families have also accumulated china cups and dishes. Bottles and jars are generally saved for storing homebrew and may also function as baby [illegible]. One only possess drums in which dehydrated milk is purchased are used to store rice and flour. Empty sugar and flour sacks are widely used to contain tea, rice, meat, and many other commodities. Discarded oil tins are used for storing gasoline and kerosene.

Domestically manufactured utensils include moosehide gun cases, embroidered with silk thread, needle cases, made of scraps of cotton cloth, sewing kits of velvet fitted with pockets and embroidered with silk thread, and envelopes of birch bark containing sinew line or pounded beaver castors.

Productive capital. In general the producer goods needed by an individual or family, both home constructed and purchased, are found in every settlement. Thus each family is in an equal position to secure or create necessary consumer goods. Even if an object is not owned by an individual, it may generally be borrowed from others within the winter settlement or from nearby neighbors. If not immediately required by the owner, such articles are readily loaned, and rent is rarely or never demanded. If an outboard motor is loaned, the borrower is only expected to supply his own gasoline. When dogs are loaned, it is with the sole stipulation that they will be reasonably well fed and otherwise cared for. In short, the necessary productive capital is widely distributed or generally accessible.

EXPLOITATIVE ACTIVITIES

During nine or more months of the year, from the middle of August till late in May, the Kaska Indians are actively occupied in exploiting the resources of their sub-Arctic environ-

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

ment. This section describes the methods of securing the principal raw materials—berries, brush, water, wood, game, fish, fur, and garden produce.

Collecting. Berries, moss, spruce brush, spruce gum, and eggs are collected. In summer the tops of the wild cassis plant may be pulled for use in soup, and a parsnip-like tuber is sometimes dug. Most berry picking occurs in late summer, but girls may still pick a few high bush cranberries while visiting the rabbit lines in early winter. When women and girls return to camp with berries, they may offer a share to women who did not participate in the picking. Men will often stop while traveling to pick from an abundant supply of blueberries or low bush cranberries.

Moss is pulled from the ground and piled in a small piece of canvas which is folded together for transportation. In winter the woman scrapes away the snow with her hands or snowshoes and uses an ax to chop out a frozen area of moss. After the moss is dried out it is used to pad children's diaper cloths. When used to chink log cabins, moss is not dried. Spruce brush for use as a camp floor is cut by the women. A number of small trees may be dragged into camp and then trimmed. More rarely, a little brush is obtained by cutting away the lower branches of a standing tree. Spruce gum is peeled off a red spruce tree in the course of traveling and chewed immediately. In June or July a hunter occasionally finds the eggs of spruce hens or willow grouse. The eggs are gently shaken or tapped to ascertain if there is a young bird inside; should this be the case, they are said to be returned to the nest.

Water is obtained from rivers, streams, and lakes in cans or open spruce-covered cooking vessels by the women. In winter the ice of the river is chopped through and this must be done several times a day or else the hole will soon freeze over again. Snow may be melted to secure water. Stagnant marsh water is avoided whenever a better source of running water is not too far distant.

Collecting wood for fuel is time consuming in the winter season. An open camp fire in summer or fall imposes relatively little effort as far as fuel gathering is concerned. Most families wait till twilight to gather a large enough supply of poles to keep the fire going until bedtime. In winter, gathering fuel for an open fire is more laborious, since enough wood has to be collected to provide heat till morning. Except for rotten spruce wood used in smoking hides, it is ideally the man's task to bring wood into camp. In practice, however, women and girls assist. Keeping a stove going in winter requires so much fuel that it is not possible to rely on the supply of dead wood lying around a settlement. Therefore, in order to insure an adequate winter wood supply for a settlement, sufficient trees must be dried two or more years in advance. Two methods are used for drying trees, burning and girdling. In the former procedure, small tracts of timber are fired when the wind is right. The fire kills the trees and in a year or so the wood is dry enough for fuel. More often red spruce trees, from six to twenty inches in diameter, are girdled. This process will dry a tree in about two years. Jackpine is sometimes dried by felling a number of trees, cleaning off the limbs, and then stacking the poles upright against a clump of willows to dry. In about three years this wood will be thoroughly dry, although half-dry jackpine is used in open fires and green jackpine is burned in heaters. A sufficient amount of wood is rarely cut to last more than a short time. Each spring there is usually a severe shortage of wood, and any deadwood lying around the settlement, including discarded artifacts, is utilized for heat.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

224 animal was feeding. By the size of the hoof prints, he is able to say if the animal was a bull or a cow. Should the tracks be two days old or more, they are abandoned; otherwise the hunter sets out to follow. Tracking requires careful walking and moccasins are always worn. The tracker avoids stepping on dead wood and is cautious not to break or snap twigs as he passes through brushy places. He watches the wind so as to approach the animal with the current blowing from the latter's direction. When the trail veers from the wind, the hunter abandons the track and, heading with the wind, makes a half circle so as to come on the moose a mile or so further on. Should he come out below the moose, he judges the character of the country before him and the signs of the track. If he knows the area ahead to be thickly covered with willow and other brush, and if the evidence in torn sod, droppings, and bruised twigs is very fresh, the hunter suspects that the animal is only a short distance off, feeding or lying down. Again the hunter makes a half circle calculated to bring him close enough to the unsuspecting animal to venture a shot. Sometimes such a circuit brings the hunter up ahead of the moose. He must then retrace his steps, circling back to where he believes the moose to be. Often deep brush intervenes in the hunter's pursuit, causing him to lose his game either by missing the trail or by frightening the animal with noises. To these difficulties must be added the hazard of coughing. Returning from a moose hunt in the fall of 1945, Old Man said that the hunters coughed so much from colds that they frightened all moose away. When he was out tracking and a paroxysm of coughing threatened, Old Man threw himself flat on the ground to suppress the noise. In the fall, when moose are breeding, the haphazard tracks of the bull are hopeless to follow, and tracking is abandoned, since the bull "never rests." At this time a hunter will try to attract a bull or cow within range of his gun by imitating the bull's call or by rubbing an old moose horn or scapula on a tree.

9:19:45 (Old Man's place). Seven miles northwest of Old Man's Place is a point along a ridge known as Moose Hill. A number of moose have been killed from this elevation, the place overlooking a marshy willow flat where moose are fond of feeding. Harry headed here to call moose. He stopped and called at a point further below on the ridge but nothing responded.[9] At Moose Hill, Harry called again. In about five minutes he saw a cow moose appear on the flat below him. He shot once and missed. Quickly he injected a hard point cartridge into his rifle and, as the running animal appeared in an open space, shot again. The second shot went through the neck killing the moose.

224 Late winter, when the snow is crusted, is a favored time for hunting moose. Then the
● 221 animal is said to be easy to kill because, sinking into the snow, he cannot readily escape the hunter who remains on the surface of the crust. Dogs are rarely used in moose hunting.

224 The moose is butchered immediately after killing, the work being done on a carpet of spruce or willow brush. The general procedure is to remove the head of the animal, skin the carcass, sever the limbs, and then, after gutting, cut the rest of the body into quarters and remove a few ribs and some tenderloin for transportation back to camp. Certain parts of

[9] The following morning when the ethnographer and a party passed this place they saw tracks of a bull crossing Harry's trail. The bull had apparently come to the spot after Harry's departure to investigate the latter's call.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

stayed out hunting a total of ten unproductive days, Hans sixteen days, and Old Man twenty days—a total of forty-six man days in which only one moose was killed.

Harry Lang's journal for 1940 was analyzed to discover the number of days spent hunting and the amount of game killed. The figures are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5. AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT IN HUNTING—1940

Date	Number of Persons	Results
April 13		"No luck"
April 14		One caribou
May 1		"4 or 5" caribou
May 5		"No luck"
May 8	2	Four caribou
May 9	2	One caribou
May 10-11	3	One beaver, one moose
May 16-18	2	One beaver, one moose
May 23		No luck
May 24		One caribou
June 3-4		One moose
June 27		No luck
July 2-8		Two moose
July 9		One bull moose
July 11		One bull moose
August 6-24	2+	Three bull moose; four goats
August 25-31	2+	Three bull moose

The brief period studied reveals both more time invested in hunting and greater success in this activity than were manifested during the term of field work. An explanation for the intense hunting may lie in the fact that during the winter of 1939-40, Harry's settlement ran short of food.[4] As a result, it seems likely that not enough time could be spent trapping to permit a leisurely summer in Lower Post. Hence the summer was utilized for hunting, the meat being important for seeing the family through till fall.

Caribou are generally sought after the beginning of December, when small flocks begin to descend from the mountains to river valleys. They are far easier to hunt than moose, and it is often possible to shoot several on the frozen river without moving far from the settlement.

A rabbit hunter can operate in a radius of a mile or two from camp and seldom spends more than two or three hours daily at his work. With a .22 caliber rifle and a game bag or packsack, the hunter starts in the late afternoon, seeking a place where black spruce grows thickly. Walking carefully, he peers under the brush and watches spaces between more distant trees. In 1943, a man generally managed to return with one or two of these animals after two hours in the bush. Rabbits are skinned and cleaned by women, to whom the hunter turns over the catch when he returns to camp. Rabbit hunting is usually done by

[4] See below, p. 103.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

adolescent boys and men, although it is also attempted by any girl old enough to handle a gun. 224 252

Porcupine are either shot or clubbed to death. Lacking a gun, Paulette Donnelly once axed down a jackpine on which she had seen a porcupine sitting. As the tree fell and the animal began to wobble off, Paulette went in pursuit and clubbed it with the back of her ax. After a porcupine is killed the hunter builds a fire and burns off the quills. The animal is then laid on a carpet of brush for butchering. A cut is first made on the ventral surface of the body, extending from the neck to the anus. The stomach and intestines immediately fall from the body cavity. The small intestine is carefully cut free, in order to preserve its blanket of fat. This organ resembles a string of link sausage, and is emptied by being pinched downward from the junction of each link. The heart, liver, and kidneys are left in the carcass, which is packed back to camp with the small gut.

The duck and goose are hunted in spring and fall, and the spruce hen and willow grouse, throughout the year. Chicken hunting, like rabbit hunting, is generally motivated by the need for meat but girls frequently kill these birds while tending to the family's rabbit line. Generally the birds are plucked immediately after being killed, when the feathers are easy to remove. Success in hunting chicken depends largely on encountering a sizeable flock of feeding birds. A man may also return to a spot where he killed several spruce hens to shoot those which escaped but which remained in the neighborhood. With luck favoring him, a hunter will sometimes return from a fowling trip with six to nine birds. When a man's bag is as large as this, he may send some of his catch to other families in camp. 223 [221] [252]

Most fishing is done in lakes and rivers before the formation of ice. The commonest fish caught for food are the grayling, river trout, lake trout, and jackfish. Fishing trips are motivated by a desire for fresh fish as a change from meat, or by the necessity of securing nourishing food for dogs. Fishing is done with a baited or fly hook and with nets. In the fall, when fish travel into a slough to spawn, a net may be strung at the entrance to such a place. Nets are hung with floats about eight inches long and four inches in diameter prepared from spruce wood. Flat stones about two inches wide and three inches long are selected for sinkers. The stones are tied to the lower end of the net at ten inch intervals. Fish line is used for this purpose, the rock being secured in a running noose and the upper end of the line fastened to the net with a double overhand knot. Several feet of manilla rope are added to each end of the net and secured on shore to a piece of drift wood or an overhanging willow. Sometimes fish are driven out of a slough into a net by shooting, the concussion sending several stunned grayling and trout to the surface. When several hours will be required to transport fish to camp, they are often gutted at the fishing site. If fish are to be carried only a short distance, they are strung through the mouth and gills on a thin willow shoot, the ends of which are then twisted together. Near camp a man or boy may fish alone. Generally men only use lines, but either sex may set a fish net. In the fall, a whole family sometimes travels several miles to a likely fishing spot and spends the day there eating fresh roasted fish. Often a family or two men will travel up to ten or fifteen miles to a fish lake, camping there for several days or a week and accumulating a dozen or two large jackfish and lake trout. 226 [221] 227 [252]

Only the rabbit is trapped exclusively for food, setting and visiting rabbit snares being 224 462

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

vessel covered with a tarp. If goods must be unloaded from a boat before reaching the final destination of a journey, they are stored on the shore and, if rain is expected, placed on poles and covered with a tarp. In contrast to the absence of farewells, greetings are warm. People meeting in Lower Post after a winter's absence in the bush always shake hands with expressions of pleasure.

Indians are usually enthusiastic about travel. The same anticipation and pleasure marks a family's return to Lower Post in the spring which characterizes their start home in the fall. Hunting trips, when the decision has been made to start, are always undertaken with exuberant optimism and enjoyment. Less eagerness marks the start of a trap line tour. There is a commonly expressed attitude of disdain for "sitting one place all the time like white man." Any prolonged camping in one spot quickly becomes tiresome and dull. This ennui is manifested in several ways. People complain of how much it is costing them to live in town; a man remembers that soon the bull moose will begin to run and lose his fat, hence the time to get meat is running short; somebody else expresses pity for the "starving" dogs who need fish and meat. Often the decision to move is made with little warning. One day may be spent finishing new dog packs or belatedly buying supplies, and the next morning the eager barking of the dogs gives notice that the family is off.

Despite the frequency of travel, families seldom move solely for pleasure and rarely go beyond the limits of the tribal district except to visit the trading post. A man's youth is ideally a time for wider travel but such longer journeys never succeed in permanently luring a man from the Kaska area. As Nitla explained it, people in a strange place are apt to become lonesome for their country and this homesickness takes considerable time to wear off. Before it has had a chance to disappear, the youth has started back to his people.

FOOD, DRINK, AND INDULGENCE

Few Indians, except possibly some members of the Frances Lake tribe, any longer strive to maintain themselves primarily on game and fish. Although meat and fish are of both gustatory and economic importance, they are not in themselves depended on for subsistence, survival being closely bound up with the foodstuffs supplied by white traders. In winter when the Indians are far from the trading post and heavily dependent on the goods which were transported in the fall, an adequate supply of food is an indispensable guarantee against hunger anxiety. Food also has capital value. A sufficient stock of accumulated foodstuffs means that, once the trapping season opens, time and effort can be concentrated in the business of getting skins rather than diffused between hunting and trapping. Hunting is ideally to be pursued in autumn, not only because at that time game is fat from rich summer living, but because then time is available for this activity and the meat obtained will allow purchased provisions to stretch through the winter. Fishing in late summer and fall is of similar economic importance. These reasons explain in part the strong emotion which Indians invest in a supply of things to eat. They also help to demonstrate why the value of food in Kaska society is comparable to that of money in our own.

The Kaska refer to two kinds of food, meat and "grub." Meat categorically includes fish and any game animals or fowl killed for eating. Grub designates any food purchased from the traders, including flour, rice, canned meat, and fruit. Each family is expected to supply

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

159 home, I had blood all over me. Once I went to a moose lick to try for a moose. It was a hot day and, while I sat watching for a moose to come, I began to feel sleepy. Finally I went to sleep. I woke up and I saw a moose. That was the second game I killed. I turned him over, all right. I got goats too, but I never killed sheep. As soon as I started to bring home meat, I fed myself. Metša didn't have to feed me anymore. I brought home everything—rabbits, fish, chicken, porcupine, and moose.

Just once I tried to stay out in the brush long enough to get medicine. But nothing saw me. I wasn't lucky. Nothing wanted me.

159 836 When I was still a kid, I saw a fellow playing with a girl. "What the hell?" I said. It scared me. I thought I would kill a girl if I ever tried that. By the time I started to grow whiskers, I was playing with girls myself. At first I was scared, but when I found out what is was—by Jesus, I liked it! One girl wanted me, but I didn't want her. She liked me and kept bothering me. She made me run after her and then I caught her.

159 When I was about eighteen years old, I stayed with Martin's bunch. Charlie was Martin's kid. Charlie was living with that bunch and had a kid, Adele. Adele's mother had come from Fort Selkirk, but she was dead. Now Charlie was keeping another woman who had two kids in Pelly Banks. Adele ran around and a young fellow slept with her. He made her pregnant and Charlie was ashamed. Many times he asked me to marry Adele. He wanted me to help him out. It was pretty hard for me to live alone. Nobody cooked for me; I'd come home late at night, tired, and sleep alone. So I told Charlie "All right." I was ready to keep his girl. When the baby was born, Charlie took him. My father-in-law treated me well. He's just like my real daddy. When I get moose, I give him meat. He's not my boss. Nobody is boss for another man. My father-in-law talked to me and said: "Don't fool around. Stay in the post. Don't play around. Don't drink."

Every fall we went into the brush with a little grub. That soon ran out, though, and then we lived on meat. I'd go hunting, come back tired, and go to sleep. The next day, hunt again. When there was no meat and when we got tired of meat, we lived on fish. Everybody fishes at Frances Lake. Winter time is no good. Sometimes, in the fall, the snow would fly and I'd have no snowshoes. That made for hard traveling. Lots of wood would have to be cut. Everything was frozen up. Life was hard up at Frances Lake. People didn't catch much fur. They didn't have enough credit to live on, and everybody was afraid of starving. We had to hunt, hunt, hunt. Maybe, if I stayed out five days, I'd get a moose. After I brought the meat home, I'd go out again and set some traps. Soon the meat was all gone. That meant it was time to hunt again. If there was no moose, we lived on snared rabbits. All the time camp was being moved. Sometimes I'd have to work while I was hungry. Then you feel weak and sick. Your stomach is empty. A man feels strong only when he has food. Sometimes we cooked wild rhubarb. On the mountains there is a little leaf that tastes just like sugar when it is boiled up. Indians have a hard life. One time I cut my knee and pus came out. For a whole month I couldn't work. My leg was stiff. I also went to Pelly Banks to hunt caribou; there are many caribou up there. About two years ago, while I was trapping, I had to travel all night. I looked up and the moon was only half in the sky. The other half went into the sky. You could see a fire. Then the other half of the moon came back. I had never seen that happen before.

159 221 My father-in-law trapped around Simpson Lake. In October we hunted moose there. In

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

November we started to set traps. Then maybe there was no meat. The lake froze over and he would set a fish net under the ice. December came around and still no meat. He couldn't move the camp. Maybe in January we would all move down to the Big River—Frances River. Then we'd trap there till February. When the snow began to crust, I went to the trading post—Frances Lake or Lower Post. Pretty soon Adele had another baby, a girl. Last year a third baby was born at Simpson Lake, but it died right away. Hans' sister died around the same time. We wanted to bring the girl's body to Frances Lake Post, but no trail was broken. We loaded the big box on a sleigh and I started up for the post. I had a hell of a time getting through.

My brother, John, wanted to sleep with my wife, but I wouldn't let him. He told Adele that I had refused. She said to me: "Me, you won't give him. Your brother tell me that." I didn't want to do that. If a man wants a woman, why doesn't he get married? River Joe told John the same thing. He told him: "If you take my daughter, keep her." But John wouldn't listen. Now he tries to be boss of my wife. He keeps my wife and is mean to her. A man should be a stranger to his brother's wife. If I die, then, after two or three years, John can take my wife. Adele doesn't want to do anything for me. She kicks all the time. My wife wasn't always like that. I've got a hole in my pants, but there's nobody to patch it. Why have I kept that girl for so many years?

Rorschach Record and Analysis

The quantitative results of Nitla's Rorschach record follow:

Total Responses = 36

W	6	16.6%	FM	6	16.6%	Hd	7	19.4%	P	18	50.0%
DW	2	5.5%	F+	16	44.4%	A	15	41.6%	O	18	50.0%
D	11	30.5%	F−	12	33.3%	Ad	6	16.6%			
Dd	17	47.2%	Fc	1	2.8%	At	6	16.6%			
			FC	1	2.8%	Sex	1	2.8%			
						N	1	2.8%			

M:sum C = 0:0.5
(FM+m):(Fc+c+C') = 6:1
VIII, IX, X/R = 33.3%

Ap. = W, (D), Dd!!!!
Suc. = Loose

The most striking feature of this record is its total absence of movement responses and the almost complete lack of color stimulated responses. In other words, Nitla is completely lacking imagination or fantasy, and at the same time is distrustful of his external environment.

Generally, the record conforms to the pattern of the society, exhibiting the subject's cooperation with the tester in a passively rebellious sort of way. In this case, however, we are dealing with an intelligence more limited than the average, which tries to exceed its potentialities. There is considerable pretence in the performance, indicating that Nitla tried to meet what he thought were the expectations of the tester. His basic uncertainty, however, reveals itself in the fact that many of the generalizations are uncertainly made. Clearly the subject has no talent or ability for this kind of conceptual activity. In other words, we are dealing with intellectualized anxiety. Behaviorally this quality is reflected in

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River
Tselona
Frances Lake

fish spear tines. After being softened by boiling caribou horn could be shaped into spoons with the aid of a stone knife. Several implements utilized teeth. A skin scraper consisted of four beaver teeth set in a wooden handle and secured with babiche line, while a beaver- or porcupine-tooth awl permitted drilling in wood. Men mounted two beaver teeth in a wooden frame for use as a drawknife or chisel. 321 412

The processing of animal skins constituted one of a woman's major tasks. After a preliminary smoking the worker rubbed the skin with a mixture of caribou brain and animal grease. She left the hide to soften for three days and then washed it in water. Afterwards it was kneaded with the fingers and scraped on a frame with a softening stick that carried a stone blade. Following another soaking in the brain mixture the process was repeated one or more times before smoking. Use of urine in tanning was not admitted. 281

Animal hides at various stages of processing, along with various vegetable products, provided materials for cordage. Types of line included sinew, rawhide, semi-tanned hide, smoked (tanned) skin, spruce root, twisted grass, and willow root. Although in a somewhat different category, the wristlets made by twisting eider-duck feathers may also be mentioned here. Fish-skin line and spruce-wood cordage are explicitly denied by contemporary informants. Strong rawhide came from bearskin and, like caribou rawhide, served for packing. Caribou and beaver (?) pelts provided babiche, while in an emergency strong packing line that remained useful for relatively limited periods could be fabricated from willow bark.[6] Grass-woven baskets had been heard about by a Dease River informant. They were manufactured in summer by women as receptacles for storing food and other materials. Grass mats met with no recognition. 283 [237] [285]

Tselona. The easterly Kaksa prepared a needle with an eye from a marten bone. Although not certain of the kind of bone used, the informant would not assent to the suggestion that it might have been a penis bone. 321 412

Frances Lake Kaska. A traveler's mention of "ropes" of goat's hair among the Frances Lake Indians is evidence of the processing of goat's wool and its probable use in weaving.[7] 286

FOOD—ITS COLLECTION, PREPARATION, AND EATING

Upper Liard Kaska. The aboriginal Kaska community took many of its cues from the seasons, whose perpetually recurring cycle accompanied notable changes in the habits and condition of the animals on which the people depended. In late summer, when game had fattened, hunters and their families moved into the mountains in pursuit of the goat, sheep, caribou, gopher, and ground hog. People thought of the long, lean season of winter as the women busied themselves drying meat and caching it for future consumption. Meanwhile men readied snowshoes, toboggans, and walking staves. When the snow became deep and the severe cold began to set in the families gathered together around a fish lake where, a little like some of the other animals, they "hiber- 221

[6] An informant reported that among the Bear Lake Sekani line was cut from rawhide, semi-tanned skin, and smoked skin. Demonstration by another informant from this group revealed use of the bowline for splicing two ends of babiche.

[7] Hunter, *Frances Lake, Yukon* (1936), 73.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

221 nated" in firmly built dwellings and subsisted on fish. Around the turn of the year "young fellows" set out to obtain dried meat from the caches which in some instances might be located 30 or more miles away. For most of the people winter remained a period of limited mobility and relaxed social intercourse. Sometimes, however, fishing failed and then the meat caches were quickly depleted. If fresh fishing sites proved equally unproductive the groups sought to make contact with another band, one that had been more fortunate in finding food. At such times men climbed to high places and scanned the horizons for smoke which in winter would be visible for long distances. Often it must have happened that all the neighbors in a tribal territory found themselves short of food, perhaps due to the cyclic fluctuation of the animal population. In such years, again like the other animals, the human population of the Cassiar also shrank. Thus a balance was kept between the people and the environment's resources. With the lengthening days of spring, the snow crusted and there came another favorable time to pursue game. Now beaver provided an important source of food, the people separating to travel to family-owned beaver creeks. Upon the break-up of the river ice the beaver and muskrat quit their dwellings to travel. That served as a cue for the Indians to build or recover canoes. Then once more they reassembled around a fish lake, where the hot summer was passed renewing friendships. This is a brief summary of the food quest and annual cycle, whose routines remain to be described in greater detail. The focus of the cycle was on food. One informant clearly recognized this when he remarked, "Old timers thought about nothing—just something to eat."

805 In the calendar of the community one sees more specifically the relationship between the people and environment, as well as the note taken of the seasonal changes. The year was divided as follows:

kliʔulaɣesa (January)—"dog burning moon." The term refers to the intense cold which caused dogs to get too close to the fire so that they sometimes burned themselves.

kaʔoɣasesa (February)—"rabbit eating moon" (0). Also taɣadasa, "cold tree moon" (X).

atasa (March)—"eagle coming moon" (0). Also called atikasa, "moon when everything [i.e., game] comes to this country" (X).

tatanasa (April)—"snow crusts moon" (0). Also tikasa, "everything here moon" (X).

A reference for the period corresponding to May could not be obtained.

ayesesa (June)—"egg moon."

akatsunzisa (July)—"game moults moon."

atosanasa (August)—"fat game moon" (0) or etdigasa, "everything ready, everything fat moon" (X).

atoditelisa (September)—"leaves color moon."

ʔustelisa (October)—"female ground hog moon."

natinitsilsa (November)—"little finger moon." So called because "its soft, everything is cool and yet not too cold."

tinitcosa (December)—"Christmas (?) moon."

222 824 262 The Indians secured food through gathering, trapping, hunting, and fishing. Girls and women did the principal collecting, although men also sought vegetable products in the course of walking through a favorable area while hunting. Berries were the main items sought by collectors and included, in approximate order of frequency, the soap berry, high- and low-bush cranberry, salmon berry, raspberry, strawberry, currant, and

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River

said the custom obtained among the Fort Liard Indians. It would seem as though the "half-cool" food ritual among the Upper Liard Indians constituted a local variation of the hot-food test pattern. Unless meat was scarce, a man entertained without his family always received enough food to bring some home to his wife. Gormandizing was somewhat uncertainly denied, informants stating that a tendency to vomit could be inhibited by spitting on one's knife scabbard.

Dease River Kaska. When the environment signaled the arrival of autumn the Dease River people began their movement into the mountains in search of meat to dry and preserve for winter consumption. With the onset of cold weather several families rejoined around some "low place" to fish and here they spent the bulk of the winter. In summer too the people camped in a large body near a good fishing cite along a lake or river. Previous to assembling, word traveled between the bands designating the meeting place.

The periods of the year are revealed in the following calendar:

cinna (January)—"pretty near long day moon."
sunawna (February)—"pretty near middle of the winter moon."
detcinna (March)—"stick [i.e., timber] moon."
statcona (April)—"big eagle flies moon."
tasatsa (May)—"long day moon."
tasilesa (June)—"pretty near change to summer moon."
tanicitcona (July)—"middle moon."
tanicicitlesa (August)—"year pretty near gone moon."
tcunusta (September)—"pretty soon snow coming moon."
nugecsa (October)—"snow comes moon."
tanasa (November)—"pretty near change winter moon."
makasa (December)—"pretty near short day moon."

The calendar reveals the interest with which the Indians looked forward to the long daylight of spring and early summer; how autumn warned of winter, snow, and the aging year; and how the shortest day of the year provided a landmark for reckoning time.

Food had to be secured in all seasons. In summer and fall women and girls sought blueberries, low bush cranberries, strawberries, raspberries, salmon berries, soap berries, and currants. With the aid of a digging stick women as well as men dug for wild carrots. People also collected onion greens, rose petals, spruce and birch fibers, willow buds, and spruce gum, but not wild rice or mushrooms. Goose eggs were welcomed in their season. Water, birch sap, and rose petals steeped in water furnished the main beverages.

In summer and winter traps caught wild animals for food. Bear, caribou, moose, and sheep were snared with four- or five-strand braided babiche line. In the case of caribou and moose the trapper extended fences from either side of his snare, such barriers consisting of poles lashed to trees and piled with brush. Deadfalls took bear, marten, beaver and smaller animals. Pitfalls found no place in the technology. Sometimes the Indians drove caribou and mountain sheep into surrounds where they could be shot or where they might trap themselves in snares. Sheep surrounds were built on relatively low

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River
Tselona

251
417

to the other, crowned such a structure. Families also utilized simpler platform caches, the food on these being covered with brush or bark held in place with heavy logs.

264

Women cooked on occasions when the family ate as a unit. Food was served on bark dishes or in wooden bowls. Spoons of sheep or caribou horn facilitated eating. People took meals twice a day, morning and night, both sexes as well as children eating together. An informant denied gormandizing, remarking that the people knew very well when to cease eating.

221
222
262

Tselona. The fat game in the high country attracted the families in autumn. With the onset of winter the bands descended to a fish lake, from which the men went out to fetch meat from caches, hauling back the food on skin toboggans. Often only two families spent the winter together at a fishing site—two brothers and their wives and children or about ten people in all. Summer sent the hunters to set snares for moose and goats. All summer the men "kept on the move," following game. The usual vegetable foods were gathered by women, including blueberries, low bush cranberries, strawberries, raspberries, currants, and soap berries. The latter berries were never mixed with grease because the berries would "smell" the grease and "settle down again, not make soap." In other words, they would not froth as they did when mashed with water.[16] People ate lily bulbs raw as well as cooked. Bark vessels served to catch birch and poplar sap for drinking. Both sexes chewed spruce gum but geophagy remained unpracticed. Spruce, birch, and jackpine fibers, peeled with a knife, were eaten raw, as was wild rhubarb which, however, people took pains to "skin." Wild onions were cooked with meat. The informant denied any use of willow buds and wild rice for food, the latter being unrecognized in this area. Two varieties of muskeg tea were sought by gatherers, the stems and leaves of both types being boiled. The species could be identified only as tas?luse and dimasket.

[388]

[261]

224
262

Our informant confidently stated that moose had always populated the country of the Tselona but denied the presence of elk, wood buffalo, and mountain sheep. Moose were snared and also hunted with the bow, the hunter relying on semicircular tracking to approach within close range of his prey. In season the moose might be called with a dried moose scapula. No custom of removing moccasins while tracking game could be recalled. Sometimes a line of men moving forward in concerted action drove a moose toward a series of snares. Caribou were also caught in snares, and skin decoys further assisted in the hunting of that animal. A hunter who wanted to kill a bear when it was summer, sought to surprise the animal in a berry patch, shooting it first with an arrow and then finishing it off with a lance bearing a caribou-horn point. In winter men obtained bears by shooting them while in a den or by thrusting lances into the lair. Sometimes a smoke fire served to drive the animal out of its winter dwelling. Lances also aided in killing beaver in the spring. A porcupine could easily be clubbed to death but in winter had first to be smoked out of its house. No taboo forbade the clubbing of any animal. Following the introduction of dogs, people employed them to track game. Other

[784]

[16] Yet Pike reports the coastal tribes to pound soap berries "till a thick froth, much resembling soap bubbles, gathers. . . . this froth, with a judicious mixture of salmon oil—or, better still, seal oil—they consider one of the things worth living for." Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1896), 35-36.